

## Interview H0225: with Thubten Sangye [tib. thub bstan sangs rgyas], (India, 1981) : Part No. 1 of 2

*Thubten Sangye was an important monk official in the Tibetan government with the rank of Khenjung. He was one of the Acting Trunyichemmo in Lhasa when the Dalai Lama went to Yadong (Tromo) in 1950. He was an unusual official because he had spent several years in the Tibetan government's office in China (khendrönlosum [tib. mkhan mgon lo gsum]) during the Guomindang era and spoke fluent Chinese. In this interview, he talks about the Kashag's plan to send several delegations abroad to seek help against the Chinese and how the Assembly agreed to do this. He also explains how he was chosen to be one of the two delegates going to America and the instructions he received from the Kashag as well as how the delegation came to be cancelled. He also discussed the negotiations to allow the Panchen Lama to return to Tibet of which he was a part, and the "party" started by Lungshar. In addition, he discusses how the protector deities told the Dalai Lama that he should take power from the Regent and leave for India. {Note in this interview, the voice is Gelek Rimpoche who translated what Thubten Sangye said.}*

Q

Thank you very much for coming. Until now we have only heard what other people have said so we want to confirm from a reliable source all the facts we have heard. Consequently, in the end, we have approached our reliable sources.

A

Although I have been not seeing well, yet since I know you well, I have come here today to tell whatever I know.

Q

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Please start by telling us how you were appointed to go to one of the foreign countries in 1949? How did it happen and what kind of instructions were you given? {Tell us} anything you can tell us about it.

A

It was during the [Taktra](#) period. It was peaceful and there were no Chinese except for the [GMD](#) (Guomindang) wireless operator. But we never discussed any government matters with them at all. It was the period when the [GMD](#) was heading towards Taiwan and Nanjing had been lost [to the Chinese Communists]. The Communists started attacking on the Tibetan borders and the situation was very tense then. The Kashag at that time was thinking how best could the country be safe-guarded. They discussed this and suggested to the Regent that it would be worthwhile to send a Tibetan delegation to foreign countries to seek their help. [Taktra](#) suggested that this matter should be consulted with the Assembly (tib. [tsondu](#)) so therefore the matter came up in the Assembly through the Kashag. The Trungtsi [the committee that consisted of the 4 heads of the Tsigang Office and the 4 heads of the [Yigtsang](#) Office] informed the Assembly about the Kashag's suggestion and started the discussion. At that time people unanimously shouted in the Assembly and requested that we should find help wherever we can. They felt that we should seek help from the UN and all the big powers. We have heard that communism is bad and they will destroy temples and even use the holy scriptures as shoe-linings, etc. So it was unanimously decided to seek help from other big powers, mainly from the UN.

Q

Was this after the Chinese were expelled?

A

I don't remember properly, but I think it happened simultaneously.

Q

What kind of help did they want? Did this mean sending soldiers and guns?

A

Any kind of help that could help save the country. What they hoped was that the UN would issue sort of an order to the Chinese not to walk into Tibet. There was no order to

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seek the help of soldiers or any other kind of help like money and weapons according to the order.

Q

Whose order was it. the Assembly's or the Kashag's?

A

When they made a unanimous decision in the Assembly, the Trungtsi went to the Kashag and reported the decision and then the Kashag asked them to ask which persons should go on this mission. At that moment in the Assembly, the old government officials got up and started shouting, "We have lot of young, energetic, educated and wealthy people. However, this is a very important matter and it requires a karmic connection, so please draw names of people using the [senriy](#) [divine] lottery. [Note: This occurred in 1949]

Then, the names of monk officials were listed (nominated) by the [Yigtsang](#) and presented, and the names of lay officials were listed by the Kashag in consultation with Tsigang. When they draw the names by the [senriy](#) lottery, they requested that it should be in the presence of both the Dalai Lama and the Regent. Moreover, they also wanted the real image of Avalokitesvara [tib. spyan ras gzigs] [there are two images] to be placed in front of the Shri Devi in the Dalai Lama's room [tib. gzim chung lha mo]. So they [the Assembly] wanted it to be done in the presence of the Lamas, Deities and the Protectors. At the time of actual drawing of the [senriy](#), the Dalai Lama and the Regent as well as the [Trunyichemmo](#) were present. Tsipön [lay officials] were not allowed to enter the room of the Shri Devi [tib. lha mo]. [Note: I don't know how it was done this time, but normally they wrote the names of the people on a very thin paper and then rolled it in a dough ball. Then all these dough-balls were weighed and made to carry equal weight. Then these balls were shaken in a bowl until one popped out.)

When this was over, the Trungtsi came and announced the names of the persons selected at the Assembly meeting. Dingja [tib. lding bya] and myself were supposed to go to America. I was not only shocked at this appointment, but was also worried. On the one hand, I would have a big responsibility and on the other hand, I knew Chinese language very well and I also know the Americans are very open and all this. I was scared that the Chinese might shoot me before I reached America. I was scared of that. [Shakabpa](#) [tib. zhwa sgab pa] and Thubten Gyebo [tib. thub bstan rgyal po] were supposed to go to China and Tsesum Phünkhang [tib. tshes gsum phun khang] and Thubten Tsepel Trekhang, [tib.

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thub bstan tshe 'phel bkraś khang] were selected to go to Nepal. This was [announced] the same day that the [senriy](#) was rolled.

Q

But they weren't going to China to seek help, were they? The Chinese were the enemy?

A

Each person had different responsibilities. The selection of the names were done in the same way and at the same time. But each person received separate orders from the Kashag. The Assembly announced the names and told us that each person had to go to the Kashag and get his orders. Some people congratulated me. Maybe they wanted to go themselves. But I was worried, so I did not reply to them or acknowledge their greetings. Maybe it was a bad omen for me.

That meeting was held in the Potala and the meeting was over that day. The Kashag also met at the Potala on that day. On the next day, the Kashag met in Lhasa and it was a Saturday. The Kashag gave each person credentials (tib. lagkhyer [lag khyer]) and specified their duties. I don't know about the others, but in my case, it was written that I should go to America to get help in everything -- economics, military equipment, etc. -- from the Government of the United States. But seeking help in the form of soldiers was not mentioned. There were no requests for troops. Furthermore, I was instructed to contact the United Nations and make an appeal to the UN to issue orders to the Chinese Government to stop their invasion of Tibet which has been living in peace and independence until then.

Q

Were they supposed to go to the UN Secretariat or ask the American Government to go to UN for them?

A

If we could go, we should go, but if we could not go, we should make the request to the UN through the American government. Since we were 4th rank officers, we had to talk to the Kashag directly. As long as it was government matters, the Kadrung [Kashag's aides] can not talk to us.

Q

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Who talked most among the [Kalön](#)?

A

The Kashag's Chairman, [tib. tripa [khri pa]] [Rampa](#), gave most of the orders.

Q

Was [Kapshöba](#) [tib. ka shod pa] also a [Shape](#) at that time?

A

Probably he was there.

Q

Was he in prison or a [Shape](#)?

A

Since many years have passed by, I don't remember properly. In addition to that (instructions) we were also given passports. It was a very funny one. It was on Tibetan paper, cut small to fit into a type-writer. On one side they had written Tibetan and on the other side, they had typed English. And underneath this it was signed by the Foreign Minister, [Rampa](#). He had signed it and put the Kashag's seal on it. Under it, Richardson had signed, giving the visa to go to India. He said we can go any place in India and get the American visa from there. Richardson said that Dekyi Lingka [the government of India's office in Lhasa] [tib. bde skyid gling ga] will ask the American embassy [through the Government of India] to issue a visa. Richardson told this to the Kashag and the Kashag told us.

Q

Who were going as the translators?

A

[?unclear?] He can speak some English, because he was trained in India. On top of this, the Kashag appointed George Taring [tib. phreng ring] and Thangmey [tib. thang smad] as English interpreters or English secretaries. We were told to select one monk official, so I chose Ngawang Thöndrup [tib. ngag dbang don grub] because he was good in writing

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and he had experience working. I requested this to the [Yigtsang](#) and the [Yigtsang](#) told me that his calligraphy was good, but he was very young so you have to be very careful. But they agreed to send him. The four persons who were going to America were given one hundred thousand Indian rupees. While I was in Gyantse, Dingja went to Shigatse. While I was waiting for Dingja to return from Shigatse, I received a telephone call saying that they have sent a letter for me, so I should not go until I receive the letter.

Q

They left after they received the letter?

A

It took about 2-3 months.

Q

Did you go to Gyantse in the winter?

A

It was almost winter. Probably it was September or October. We had to wait for a long time in Gyantse. We did not know it at that time, but later we came to know that the Tibetan Government had sent a letter through the British in Lhasa to the American Government to ask for a visa and had received a reply saying that they had no objection and that they will issue a visa. However, they suggested that it would be better to talk and deal with the Chinese themselves, rather than doing all this. They also said that if you want to go to the UN, then the Secretary of the UN is so and so. The Chinese had already come to know about it [the planned delegation] and they already started saying that we were going to settle the matter peacefully and that we are going to have talks in Hong Kong.

So people started saying that because of drawing [senriy](#) lots, the plan had gone wrong because the original idea was that [Shakabpa](#) had just returned from America and he wanted to return there. I knew Chinese language very well. So people said that because of the drawing of [senriy](#) lots, the whole thing got mixed up and did not work out. Normally, my job was simply attending the office and I did not bother about anything else. But since then, when I was given the responsibility to save Tibet from the Chinese, this responsibility which was entrusted to me by the people and the Protector Deity, and the main hope was in America and how to seek it. This was in my mind. I was fully occupied with these

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thoughts. I stayed for 6 months in Gyantse and at the time of my leaving, the crops had already grown almost one foot.

At that time, the Chinese had been saying that they want to negotiate and settle this peacefully. Yuthok [tib. g.yu thog] was already in India. For months there was no word from Lhasa and we had nothing to do. So after that we sent a reminder to Lhasa saying that since there was no word from Lhasa for so long, shall we come back now. They replied saying that we should come back from Gyantse and hand over the money to the trade-office in Kalimpong. I delivered this money to the Assembly and then I gave them the receipt for the money and I also returned the passport.

Then it was decided by the Assembly that the Kashag had no right to cancel a decision already made by the Assembly. But the Kashag later made a little explanation to the Trungtsi and somehow it was covered up. I personally feel that the Kashag should bear the responsibility. It looks like someone pulled the string. To me it seems more or less for personal reasons. When Ngabö was appointed as the governor of Kham he immediately informed the Kashag that there is no use in calling up the local militia because it will create lot of hardships and disharmony between the Kham local people and the Tibetan Government.

So Ngabö suggested that the Kashag withdraw all the local militia the moment he was given the responsibility of Doji. People at that time said that although Ngabö's love and compassion for the downtrodden masses was very good, but this is not the right time to withdraw the soldiers. At that time, the Foreign Office was headed by Sursur [tib. zur zur] and Dzasa Lobsang Palden [tib. blo bzang dpal ldan]. Lobsang Palden fell sick and died, so I was appointed as his substitute for awhile. I remember that one day I told my colleague Sursur that India is becoming independent, so wasn't it necessary for us to do something. Sursur said, many of our territories are under their control, so we have to get them back. But somehow this conversation faded out completely. Then I was withdrawn from this office and was appointed [Laja](#), and Liushar [tib. sne'u shar] was appointed as a Dzasa.

People were very much worried at that time. It was picnic time and on that day they received a wireless message from Chamdo saying the Kadrung should come to listen. While I was listening to the wireless, the line was cut-off and that was the last contact. So, people started worrying a lot. That's all. They could not do anything.

Q

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People from the Chamdo side said that they kept asking the Government what they should do, whether to surrender, or shift to Lhodzong [tib. lho rdzong], and finally when they did not receive any reply to their first two wireless messages, they still waited for a reply. At that time the reply they received was that it is picnic time and they would send the reply as soon as the picnic is over. This annoyed him [Ngabö] and [he] said, "Shit picnic." What was the reason for not replying to the wireless?

A

That could be true. We should have been more active, but we were lazy. As far as we were concerned, we had to go to the Kashag picnic since we were invited. It could be true also, because such matters had to go to the Regent, and also before sending it to the Regent, they might have hoped that the situation might change for the better. These things are normal Tibetan tactics. That could have been the reason also. If our soldiers had good weapons and training we could have been saved, very easily, mainly because of the mountains and rivers and also there were no roads. But then we had no adequate supply of weapons, and no proper training and no support. Chamdo was taken over within a very short period. When Chamdo was lost, the protector oracles [Nechung](#), [tib. gnas chung] and Gadong [tib. dga' gdong] were invited to Dalai Lama's room for consultation.

Q

Whose idea was it to invite [Nechung](#) and Gadong?

A

It was not the Assembly's idea. It was the Kashag and the Yigtsang's idea.

Q

What happened then?

A

Then [Nechung](#) fell out of trance and when Gadong was about to go out of trance, Gadong reappeared [in the medium's body] and became more strong and made three prostrations to the Dalai Lama and then said, "It is now time for you to take over". Since [Taktra](#) [the Regent] was also present at that time, it was very hard to dismiss him, but they had to do it. Normally when the protector deities come into trance they go to the Dalai



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Lama, offer him a [khata](#) scarf and then whatever he wants to say, he will say it in his [the Dalai Lama's] ears. Then he goes to the Regent and does the same thing. After that he will go back to his own chair, and then they read out whatever they want to request. The Shapes and all the others will go one by one, to offer a [khata](#) and all this. The Talama, [tib. ta bla ma] being the senior most [Trunyichemmo](#), read the questions being asked for predictions [tib. lung zhu].

Q

What was written in those questions?

A

Normally, the first thing was about Dalai Lama's life and then about Regent's life and finally about the emergency situation in Chamdo. So probably they did not give a proper reply. He [the Talama] was the man who was reading the question so he had no alternative but go to him and tell him, "Now it is time for you to speak properly and in detail, otherwise this is very vague."

Q

Did he have to get up from where he was sitting?

A

Nobody sits. Except for the Dalai Lama and the Regent everybody stands nearby. The Talama will read out the questions loudly, but when the Dalai Lama and Regent talk with the protector deity, others will not hear. The senior most will read the question and the junior most will take down the notes.

Q

What happened when Dalai Lama was told that he should take over power?

A

People started whispering to each other that the diety had said that the Dalai Lama should take over. Then the ceremony was over.

Finally, the Khambas did not like Lhalu [tib. lha klu] because he had been rough with the [Khamba] [miser](#) (masses). However he was considered very strong and a difficult person

to handle. The Khambas even said that if Lhalu had stayed in Chamdo, the Chinese could not have come so easily. But Lhalu resigned. However, then Lhalu was told to wait until his successor arrives and becomes used to his job. However, they [those two] did not get along with each other on policy matters, so Lhalu wanted to leave as soon as he could. In my opinion, it was very unfortunate that Geda [tib. dge stag] Trülku died, because there was hope that he could make peaceful negotiations. Geda Trülku was very important. I have heard from very reliable Khambas that he was one of the best students of Tagpu Dorje Chang [tib. stag phu rdo rje 'chang] of Nagshö [tib. nag shod].

Tagphu Dorje Chang had many students and out of them he said that Phabongkha [tib. pha bong kha] was like the sun, Khangsar Dorje Chang [tib. khang gsar] was like the moon, [Taktra](#) was like the precious jewel, and Geda Trülku was like his heart. So such an important Lama would not do anything bad. Although he was a Gelugpa, he was not sectarian. Therefore such a Lama would never do anything bad. Moreover, during the Long March of the Communists, Mao and Zhou had come to Geda's place. They were like beggars and were in great difficulty, so out of compassion, Geda gave everything they needed. Henceforth, Mao and Zhou were grateful to him. Also, they had asked Geda to do divination about whether they would win over the Guomindang. Geda had told them that they definitely will win over the [GMD](#). Mao and Zhou promised Geda that they would do anything for him if they defeat the [GMD](#). Then they asked Geda whether they should go to Tibet or Qinghai. Geda told them that they should not go to Tibet. So they went towards Qinghai.

Therefore, I think Geda Trülku could have brought good results. However, if what the Chinese have said was true, he was killed by Ford. It was a great loss. That's what I feel. I hoped that Geda Trülku's negotiations would have been the best. But I lost hope.

Q

What were the differences between Geda Trülku and [Shakabpa](#)?

A

Mainly it was because of religious influence. Mao had signed a letter with the blood of his fingers for Geda Trülku, but [Shakabpa](#) did not have that. [Note: this meaning is unclear] There was a big difference.

Whoever could go to India, was moving towards India. Thubten Gawala [tib. thub bstan dga' ba lags] who was the teacher of Ngawang Chösang [tib. ngag dbang chos bzang]

and myself were appointed Acting [Trunyichemmo](#). Since the two of us alone couldn't carry the responsibility, later Ngawang Thöndup was also appointed. In the [Yigtsang](#), there was no one except Jawtang [tib. lcog steng]. ... And the order [to us] said that all the [Trunyichemmo](#) are going with the Dalai Lama, so there will be nobody and therefore you two have to take the responsibility to look after the [Yigtsang](#).

The date [of departure] was kept very secret, but the plan of leaving was not that secret. [Gyambumgang](#) was [Jigyab khempo](#) and Jawtang was the acting [Jigyab khempo](#). Among the Tsipön, except for Kunsangtse [tib. kun bzang rtse], all the rest were Acting Tsipön [tib. tsitsap [rtsis tshab]]. At the time that Thubten Lengmön [tib. thub bstan legs smon] and [Sambo](#) Tenzin Thöndup [tib. bsam pho bstan 'dzin don grub] were leaving for China, Jawtang was still there (in Lhasa). Thubten Lengmön was appointed with a recommendation from Jawtang. Because Jawtang suggested Thubten Lengmön's name to the [Yigtsang](#), he was appointed. For the appointment, they had to consult the [Jigyab khempo](#). It is first discussed and decided by the [Yigtsang](#), and then finally they have to seek the Jigyab khempo's acceptance. The [Jigyab khempo](#) has the right to reconsider the Yigtsang's decision, but normally he does not do that. He normally accepts the Yigtsang's decision, although he has the power to change it.

They [the acting officials left in Lhasa] carried out the daily activities, but the political matters were dealt with by the Kashag [with the Dalai Lama in Yadong]. The [Yigtsang](#) had to deal with monastic matters, issuing Bugdam [edicts], etc. Most of the decisions were later made by the two Sitsab [Acting Chief Ministers]. They were always in touch with Yadung (Tromo) through the secret telegraph line they had set up. So they did not call many Trungtsi committee meetings.

Then they had an Assembly meeting in Lhasa that was not attended by the Sitsab and Katsab [Acting Kalöns], but rather was chaired by the Acting [Trunyichemmo](#) (tib. trungtsab [drung tshab]) and the Acting Tsipön (tib. tsitsab [rtsis tshab]) who informed the Assembly that the 17-Point Agreement has been signed and that such and such are the points in the Agreement so what do you think about it? They said that according to the Agreement, the Dalai Lama's position will be not be tampered with and there will be freedom to practice religion. So everyone thought it was reasonable, except that they expressed their concern over the sending of People's Liberation Army soldiers to Tibet. Otherwise, the Assembly felt that there was not much they can do for the time being. After the return [of the Tibetan representatives in Beijing], then we can know in detail what had actually happened. This was the reply/response of the Assembly in Lhasa.

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Since he was the senior most official, he had to say that we have informed the Assembly. We sent a delegation to China for negotiation that was headed by Ngabö. We also sent two representatives from here (Lhasa), and two were sent from [Tromo](#) (Yadong). The Agreement has been signed and they [the representatives] neither said that they had consulted [about the terms] nor they had not consulted. But these are the terms of the Agreement so if you don't agree, speak up. This was his opening remarks. So he asked for the opinions of the Assembly on the matter. People were afraid of the Dalai Lama going to a foreign land, so they accepted everything, except for the People's Liberation Army soldiers coming into Tibet. They were concerned most about the coming of the People's Liberation Army soldiers into Tibet.

Q

In general, everybody says that the Trungtsi have great influence in the Assembly. So how do they in general influence the decisions, for example in this case?

A

They have no right to change or do anything, but only [influence things] when they speak or make remarks because the Trungtsi are the senior most responsible persons. So in this way they can influence people more effectively than others can. Their responsibility was to summarize the draft conclusion of the Assembly's discussion. The main (fear) in everybody's mind was that we have no help and no one to rely upon. So whatever (help) we get, we have to accept it.

The Sitsab are normally not big [powerful, rich] persons. One was an ordinary monk who had become Sitsab. And even though [Lukhangwa](#) [tib. klu khang ba] was a lay official, he was one of the smaller ones [smaller aristocratic families]. But they were very straightforward and powerful. Lobsang Tashi, [tib. blo bzang bkra shis] and [Lukhangwa](#) both were forceful. They might have talked to the Kashag [with the Dalai Lama in Yadong], but the Katsab [in Lhasa] never informed us. Later, I did hear something but not clearly. Then I remembers when it was decided to come back, they sent a request to the Dalai Lama to return to Lhasa as soon as possible. Then they sent three separate groups to invite the Dalai Lama back to Lhasa.

Q

Who invited Dalai Lama back?

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A

The Government in Tibet in Lhasa. I remember that the [Yigtsang](#) drafted the letter. In 1939, I returned [from China] and Reting, who was the Regent, resigned in 1940. The traders of the [labrang](#) [of Reting] came and they continued their business in China where one [person] goes and the other comes. One of Reting Labrang's officials (tib. [dechang](#) [Ide chang]) came. I don't remember his name. I didn't know what he negotiated. Probably they kept it secret from us [he was in the Tibetan government's office in Beijing, the [Khendrönlosum](#) [tib. mkhan mgron lo gsum]. He had negotiated and the Panchen Lama said that he is going [back to Tibet from exile in China]. We [the Tibetan government through the [Khendrönlosum](#) office] said that soldiers should not be taken with him [the Panchen Lama]. We told this to the big Chinese leaders a number of times. Generally, we talked with the Tibet-Mongolian Office [tib. bod sog las khungs] and they went and talked with other important persons and the big Chinese leaders. We told Chiang Kaishek this several times. Later we told Chiang just after he came from Xian. At that time, he was not feeling well and he scolded us. We met the Chinese military officer called Zhou something, who came to see off the Panchen Lama at a social gathering, but they did not have any conversation. There were some people there from [Tashilhunpo](#) and Mongolia and [Amdo](#). In Tibetan tradition, if you are a real Tibetan, they will send you without any difficulty, but they try to stop non-Tibetans.

Q

Who?

A

The Tibetan Government. So, what the Government of Tibet was telling them [the Panchen Lama] was that from the moment when they reached the Tibetan border, whatever bodyguards were needed, the Tibetan soldiers will be posted [and will provide this]. There was no objection for [Tashilhunpo](#) [the Panchen Lama] to having Tibetans as bodyguards, but not a single Chinese soldier will be allowed [to enter Tibet]. This was insisted upon. Finally, there was a big meeting and in the end Depön [Namseling](#) [tib. rnam sras gling] was sent up to Rakshi Lungshod [tib. rag zhi ? klung shod]. Finally, the Panchen Lama passed away in Jyekundo [tib. skye rgu mdo]. When the Communists (gained power), they moved from Jyekundo to Horgog. They had been negotiating with

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the Chinese, and had been informing the Kashag about reducing the number of soldiers coming with the Panchen Lama. Finally, they refused to reduce the number of soldiers beyond 500 soldiers.

The reason why they wanted to bring lot of soldiers with them was that they wanted to be sort of semi-independent. Otherwise, there was no reason for bringing so many solders. As you know, the Lamas always listen to their servants. So the Panchen Lama, though he realized there was no need to take so many soldiers to return to his monastery [in Tibet], as you know, Lamas always listen to their servants, and servants wanted to show off the strength of the soldiers, etc. Also, the Chinese wanted to dispatch those soldiers. So he [the Panchen Lama] would never have said that [by himself]. If the Panchen Lama had openly said, "I don't need the Chinese" (soldiers), then I think there would not have been much problem for him to come back to Tibet.

Chiang Kaishek himself was the main person who helped us [the office]. He had good feelings for the Dalai Lama, so we always talked to him and through him we get lot of work done. Otherwise, it was impossible to negotiate from the very beginning. The Chinese had very firmly made up their minds.

Q

So you had talks with Chiang Kaishek?

A

I had talks with Chiang Kaishek. In the end, Chiang Kaishek told us that even the Panchen Lama needs some freedom. He [Lungshar] was a very nice person; well-built, handsome, with a little moustache. He belonged to the Nyingma sect [tib. rnying ma] sect. He had also strong national feelings. But he was not decisive and he may be not very straightforward and honest. He had been rough and tough on [Tashilhunpo](#).

Q

What did his [Lungshar's] party want?

A

I don't know the real inside story of the party, but I attended a meeting because the Trungtsi took me to the meeting. On the first day of the meeting, the agreement or the pledge [tib. gan rgya] of [Lungshar's] Party (tib. kyichog kundü [skyid phyogs kun

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'dus]) was read out. It didn't contain much, other than saying that since the Dalai Lama had passed away, the responsibility of the Government lies with the Government's officers until the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama is discovered so we should protect the Government more dearer than our lives. Except for this, it contained nothing more. In the end, everybody put their seals on it and I also put my seal on it.

Q

Where was the meeting held?

A

The meeting was held in the house of [Kytöpa](#) [tib. skyid stod pa].

Q

Was [Lungshar](#) present?

A

Lungshar was not at the meeting.

Q

Who else was at the meeting?

A

[Tsidrung] Kongtrula [tib. kong phrug lags] and a few others.

Q

Were they all [tsidrung](#) (monk officials)?

A

On that day, the meeting was attended by monk officials only, because they had gone to the meeting straight after the Trungja [the monk official's daily tea ritual] was over. The meeting was in the house where the Seshing [tib. zas zhim] School is now held.

Q

What did people say when they came out of the meeting?



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A

I attended the meeting, but I had some doubts and when others put their seals on it, I said that I had forgotten to bring my seal although I had it with me. I hoped to avoid doing that. But the next day I was again taken to the meeting at which they again read out the same thing and on that day I had to put my seal on it. Only 9 or 10 persons were present that day. At that time, Phabongkha [tib. pha bong kha] was giving his teaching (religious) at [Muru](#) [tib. rme ru]. So I had some doubts. I was appointed the Lanyer [tib. bla gnyer] (steward) of Dagpo Gaden Rabgye [tib. dwags po dga' ldan rab rgyas] and originally it was planned that a servant will be sent and I myself was not going to go there. But by then, I had some doubts and felt very uncomfortable about it [Lungshar]. So I told my teacher that I am going there personally to take over (take charge) and also to meet my family on the way. My teacher, however, told me that I can not go until the teaching (of Phabongka) was over. So since I could not tell him that I had put my seal [on the oath document] [I had to wait]. Finally, I went to Dagpo and when those people were arrested [with Lungshar], I received an order [tib. bka' rgya] from the Assembly which made me feel suspicious. The order said that my seal was on the osth document and that I should explain this. I thought that this may be not that serious or dangerous, because if it were serious, they would have sent soldiers and arrested me. But they had just sent an order, which meant it was not a serious matter. I had taken the oath, but I knew nothing about it, and I was not aware of the internal and external matters. Taking the oath of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the ten directions, etc, [tib. phyogs bcu'i rgyal ba sras bcas] I [said] have no knowledge about the party and had simply put on my seal. And if I have committed any mistakes, then I apologize. So, in the end, my name was not even listed among those who were punished for putting on their seals. He [Kongtrula] was originally from Kongpo, and [Sera Mey](#) College. He became a Tselabdra [student to become a monk official] under the policy of conscripting monks to serve as monk officials [tib. grwa 'phyags], and became a monk official. He was one of the senior monk officials.

Q

How old was Kongtrula then?

A

He was in his late 30's.



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Q

Were the other monk officials young too? [Kyitöpa](#) and Dragtenla [tib. grags bstan lags], etc.

A

I was the youngest of them all. Most of them were seniors. Later, it was revealed that [Lungshar](#) wanted to become the Prime Minister and hold all the power and wanted to dismiss the present power-holders. Their plans were what we saw. So it must have been in the plan.

Q

What month was it?

A

It was between the two Prayer Festivals, the [Tsongjö](#) and the Mönlam, so it has to be the beginning of the 2nd month of the Tibetan calendar.

Q

Was it after the [Drongdrag](#), [tib. grong drag] Regiment incident?

A

Yes, it was after that. That was over and this was the second chapter. [Lungshar](#) was a very learned person, so he might have planned to catch (entice) the junior and lower ranking officers. I am quite sure that his main objective was nothing else but to grasp power. But he had said that once he held the power, he would be good.

So it was just like Tsarong during the 13th Dalai Lama's period. Tsarong wanted to built up Tibet's military strength, and [Lungshar](#) similarly wanted to built up the political strength. This is the similarity between the two. It was not a good thing. I was attending school then.

Some of [Loseling](#) College's [tib. blo gsal gling] estates were going into the hands of some individuals. They had some kind of misunderstanding. Although, the estates belonged to [Loseling](#) itself, yet some individual monks had been holding them. The 13th Dalai Lama did not agree and so the monks had a meeting and then they ran down into [Norbulinga](#) and broke things [around the Dalai Lama's living quarters in 1921] and did all this. Some

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of Loseling's estates had been leased out to different people and [Loseling](#) wanted them back. But the 13th Dalai Lama did not agree to this. He said, you can raise the lease rent but you can not transfer the ownership back to [Loseling](#). It was a *khanzin* [tib. *kha 'dzin*] which means occupying the land generation after generation. They wanted to transfer the ownership back to [Loseling](#), but the 13th Dalai Lama did not agree. Hence, the trouble started. That was the period when the 13th Dalai Lama was on a 3 year retreat for Yamantaka (tib. *jigjey* ['jigs byed]). This was the reason.

Later, when [Trimön](#) [tib. *khri smon*] ran away to [Loseling](#) [during the [Lungshar](#) episode], he (Trimön) said at a [Loseling](#) meeting that now that the 13th Dalai Lama is not alive, I can get back the ownership of all the [Loseling](#) estates and in return you have to protect my life now. [Trimön](#) later did give back the ownership of Loseling's estates.

The Assembly meetings [about the monk vandals] was held daily at the Shabten Lhakhang [tib. *zhabs brtan lha khang*] [in Norbulinga]. Tsarong and Tsögo [tib. *mtsho sgo*] had been sending messages saying that they are not surrendering at all and that we may even have to set it [Loseling College] on fire. Then [Gomang](#) [tib. *sgo mang*] College's Abbot was supposed to have said that, "If the lice is eating or itching you, you can not burn the whole clothing. You have to find the lice and throw them out." Which means they should get hold of the ring-leaders, and not bother the whole monastery. Then later the ring-leaders were handed over. People said that the people handed over as the ring-leaders were actually not the real ring-leaders. Whatever, if may be, this is how it happened. So, later Drepung surrendered.

Q

Did it take about a week?

A

More than a week. The monks were inside and the soldiers had it surrounded. The government said that it wants the ring-leaders only, but the monks refused to hand over the ring-leaders. So this was what happened. Later the [Loseling College manager] the [Tshaja](#) [tib. *rtsa phyag*] was exiled. It was not that the [Tshaja](#) did not have any feelings for the Dalai Lama, but it was only because of this incident. He had already made arrangements for inviting the Dalai Lama to [Loseling](#) to inaugurate a new building.

[Note: He returns to talking about the negotiations in Beijing in 1951] He says it takes one month between Lhasa and [Tromo](#) and the messages reach within one week between

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Lhasa and Chamdo. The two Sitsab were determined to negotiate. Of course, the Dalai Lama was in [Tromo](#), but the two Sitsab were in the capital, and they [felt they] were responsible. However, the decision to carry on the negotiation came totally from [Tromo](#). In Lhasa, only the Katsab, Trungtsab and Sitsab were there.]

Q

Ngabö sent two messengers from Chamdo. When was it? Do you think nobody had made relations [with the Chinese] before Ngabö sent the messengers?

A

Yes. I think there were no relations before that. At that time, Lhalu was in Kongpo, and they sent information through telegrams. Later, [Tromo](#) started to send wireless messages directly to Beijing.

Q

In the meanwhile, Sursur Dzasa was sent. Where was he sent from?

A

From [Tromo](#).

Q

According to me, I heard that the two Sitsabs wanted the talks to be held in Lhasa and later [Shakabpa](#) went to [Tromo](#) and said that the talks should be held in Beijing and Sursur Dzasa and Chömphe! Thubten La [tib. chos 'phel thub bstan lags] were sent to talk [to India with the Chinese Ambassador]. After they came back it was decided to hold the talks in Beijing.

A

I didn't hear clearly about this, but probably it was like that. Normally we, the Acting [Trunyichemmo](#), were the secretaries of the Dalai Lama, but when the Dalai Lama was not there, we were the secretaries of the Regent or Sitsab and we have nothing to do with the Kashag and the Assembly. The two Sitsab were sort of stubborn [tib. mgo mkhregs po].

Q

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If you look at it, [Shakabpa](#) went to China, but it seems it did not make any difference because what the Chinese had said earlier, they said the same thing later too. So his second visit does not seem to have made any difference, right?

A

I heard from [Yabshi](#) Aku la, [tib. [yab](#) gzhis a khu lags] [Gyalo Thondup's father-in-law] something about talking to Hong Kong. Something like that. It was quite vague. I did not understand it properly.

Q

When did Lhalu become the ex-Kalön or Kasur [tib. bka' zur]?

A

After the Dalai Lama returned from [Tromo](#), the Katsab were made Shapes and Lhalu became a Kasur.

Q

Were you in the Assembly when Reting was investigated?

A

I was not a representative in the Assembly, but I was appointed one of the additional general head, [tib. spyi khyab] of the soldiers guarding Reting when he was imprisoned in [Sharchenjog](#), [tib. shar chen lcog]. I treated Reting very kindly. The room where Reting was shut up in was a work hostel of a junior staff person where people went down to the room through stone steps. Reting was seated on a high cushion. I was the one who served him the food which was brought from the [his] [labrang](#). I had to stay for a few days.